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WE MIGHT HAVE DONE WORSE.

There's many a slip on the stony hillside
Of life as we up to the summit would climb;
The pathway is narrow, the pitfalls are wide,
And we can go only one step at a time.
Then what wonder so many have made a misstep—
And fallen? Let us pause ere their sin we rehearse,
And still reproaches that come to the lip,
For, aught that we know, we might have done worse.

If we saw the pitfall are we not to blame—
In a measure—if we did not there kindly extend
The hand to their saving? The sin is the same,
Be the victim a stranger, or be he a friend.
And once he has fallen—the wisest is he
Who stops with a blessing instead of a curse—
With a heart full of pity—for lo! it may be
In climbing the hill we might have done worse.

—Helen A. Manville.

HAIR OIL AND HAIR DYE.

Few Men Use Them Nowadays—Gray Hair Rather Fashionable.

"Very few men want oil on their hair nowadays," said a barber to a reporter. "A few years ago the man who didn't use hair oil was the exception; now the man who does use it is the exception. Of course we are glad of the change in taste, for it is money in our pockets. Five years ago I had to have a fresh supply of oil twice a week; now the same quantity will last me a month."

"How about dyeing the hair and beard?" the reporter asked.

"There has been a greater falling off in the use of dye than in the use of hair oil," the barber continued. "A few years ago there was a large class of gay old fellows who dyed their hair and whiskers almost as regularly as they shaved. Most of these men were more or less inclined to be sports or beaus, and always wanted to look as young as possible. Others, however, were respectable and steady going citizens and business men, who gave in to their vanity enough to want to keep looking young. There was a large class of out and out gamblers and sharpers, who seemed to have an idea it was out of keeping with their profession to have anything but jet black whiskers and mustaches. So that nearly all gamblers or 'sports' who had red or sandy hair on their face, or on their head, for that matter, used to have it dyed regularly as black as they could get it. A few of these are still around town. It's easy enough to tell them, because their eyebrows don't match the rest of the hair on their face."

"So you don't have much use for hair dye nowadays?" the reporter interrogated, to keep up the flow of tonsorial reminiscences and reflections, which, contrary to the traditions of the craft, seemed to show signs of drying up.

"No, indeed. When a man comes along now and asks to have his mustache or hair dyed, he usually catches us unprepared, and if we have any dye on hand at all it generally takes a good while to hunt it up and get the bottle dusted off. I think we have only one regular customer in that line now, and he isn't an old man, either. He is a young fellow, whose hair is black, or nearly black, while his eyebrows and beard are sandy. He has his whiskers and eyebrows dyed to match his hair, regularly twice a month.

"But young men don't seem to care nowadays if their hair and beard are gray. In fact, they seem to be rather proud of it. When they really begin to grow old—that is, when they get within a few laps of 50—they get sensitive about it, however, and if they are not bald frequently inquire as to the means for preventing the hair from turning gray, etc.

"Oh, yes, a great many men use cosmetic on their mustaches," the barber continued, in response to a suggestion. "In fact, there are very few who don't use it. Some time ago most men wouldn't let a barber put any powder on their faces after shaving. Now nearly all ask for it. It's laughable how particular some men are about their hair. No matter how much care the barber takes about combing and brushing it they are never satisfied, but always insist on taking the comb and brush themselves and arranging it just so, with every hair lying in a certain position."—Washington Star.

Touched a Weak Spot.

A childish remark very often punctures the assertions of an older head. A friend of mine was at the tea table, speaking of the necessity of courtesy and the manner in which it distinguished a gentleman from a boor. "I invariably lift my hat to a lady acquaintance on the street. In fact, the practice has become such a matter of habit that it is almost impossible to neglect this tribute of courtesy." "But, pa," remarked his little daughter, "you don't lift your hat to mother when you meet her on the street; she's one lady you don't do it to, I know." "Oh," petulantly returned the father, "she's my wife; I don't need to do so." But as he made this reply his confusion readily proved that the child had touched a vulnerable spot in his claim to distinction for courtesy.—Boston Budget "Saunterer."

Where Education Will Tell.

"People make a great mistake in desiring their boys to enter what are called the learned professions," said one man to another in the lobby of a theatre between the acts. "Now, my boy will graduate from the high school in a few weeks and I intend to apprentice him to an acquaintance of mine who owns a mill up town. Some of those loom bosses and foremen around factories make splendid wages—far more than the average professional man earns. People think that when a boy has been well schooled he should not be put in such a place as a mill, but I tell you it's the place for education to tell, as the competition there is not so great in that respect."—Philadelphia Call.

To Unseal an Envelope.

Occasionally one seals an envelope without an inclosure, or after addressing and stamping it thinks of something important that should have been added to the letter. One way out of the dilemma is to take an eight inch piece of steel wire, bent at a right angle in the center (to be held easily) and of a diameter half that of a lead pencil and inserting one end under the outside lap at one corner slowly crowd toward the center of the envelope. Keep the round steel exactly across the gum streak or the lap will be torn. Arriving at the center start down in the same way from the other corner. I have seen people try to do this thing with a lead pincil, but with poor success. The angle made by the separating laps was too abrupt.—The Writer.

Natural Gas and Setting Hens.

The women in and for eight or ten miles around Anderson are just boiling over with wrath, because the terrible roaring of the immense gas well at that village has been more disastrous to the egg crop than the loudest thunder ever heard. Not an egg will hatch, and even the old hens refuse to lay, the noise being so great that the biddies become so bewildered that they cannot return to the nest, and even forget to put a shell on the egg.—Muncie Herald.

ABOUT UMBRELLAS.

THEIR ORIGIN ASSOCIATED WITH SHADE RATHER THAN MOISTURE.

The Umbrella a Relic of Solar Worship—Mrs. Gamp's Sunshade—The Fashionable Article—Folding Up a Silk Umbrella—A Sure Test.

There are those who suppose that the origin of the umbrella is to be sought for in man's need of some portable protection from the rain, which need found expression in the invention of the modern umbrella. Philology and science, however, point to a different conclusion, the former telling us that the umbrella is associated with shade rather than moisture, and the latter that it is a relic of solar worship. The word "umbrella" is a reduplicated form of the Latin word umbra, signifying "shade," and means really a little shade, in the same way that caliga (leggings) is father to the word "caligula" (little leggings).

Having decided the origin of the word, we will next proceed to give the view of a certain learned specialist as to the derivation of the article itself. The umbrella, according to our authority, is a relic of solar worship, was probably imported from Persia, and its origin has no more to do with keeping off rain than with keeping off lightning or thunderbolts. The Persians, it is well known, were worshippers of the heavenly bodies, the sun occupying the same place among their hierarchy of deities as he does among his own orbs. Viewing him as all powerful, as all intelligent, cognizant of the smallest act of their lives, the Persians hit at last upon a sort of portable screen which they might interpose between themselves and his beams, securing for the former privacy and for the latter ignorance of what his devotees were doing. This may sound a rather far fetched theory, but it is probably the true one, and whether or no, it is certain umbrellas did not originate in either Europe or America.

THE UMBRELLA ABROAD.

In Siam the possession of umbrellas is restricted to those of high rank, Mr. Spencer telling us that one of the titles of the dusky monarch there is "King of the Umbrella Wearing Chiefs." In the two great university towns of England etiquette discountenances under graduates appearing on the streets with umbrellas, and only permits the airing of these luxuries to fellows and graduates. In fiction the person of Mrs. Gamp has conferred on the umbrella an immortality which not even the muse of tragedy could do. Indeed, the umbrella cuts but a poor figure in the tragedy, while it is quite at home in the flights of comedy or farce. Mrs. Gamp's sunshade is so famous that it has given its name to those fluffy, obese looking articles which one is apt to associate with the ranter of old times and with modern representatives of the Lime Kiln club. The fashionable umbrella is as different a looking affair to one of these as it is possible to imagine. A greater contrast does not exist between a racer and a Clydesdale than between the modern umbrella and its woolly prototype of a generation ago. The former is made of silk, is invariably black, brown or green in hue, is fitted to a light but strong framework, and whether viewed as a use or an ornament is an eminently pleasing object to contemplate.

The umbrella is sometimes used as a weapon of offense and defense, but is rather a poor affair. If you want to strike your enemy a good "swashing blow" you had better have recourse to some other implement than an umbrella. Viewed in this light, it presents more facilities for being used stiletto wise than as a claymore or cutlass. Everything to its uses, and as you can't expect to keep rain off with a foil, so you must not hope to draw blood with an umbrella. If the latter is disappointing as a weapon of offense so it is as a weapon of defense.

THE SILK UMBRELLA.

If you are the possessor of a silk umbrella and are desirous of appraising its merits, see what proportion the spread of it when open bears to the diameter when shut. To the extent the relation partakes of the nature of an inverse ratio, to that extent is your umbrella a good one. Folding up a silk umbrella is quite an art, the acquisition of which seems wholly impossible to some people. You should gather the tips firmly together in your right hand, elevate your umbrella to an angle of forty-five degrees with the trunk of the body; then, commencing at the bottom, with your left hand gather the folds of the umbrella rapidly together, working all the while toward the top. When you have got as far as the confining band stop, adjust it, and your umbrella is folded. A folded silk umbrella which has "bights" in it or measures more than two inches in diameter is a fraud, or else its owner does not possess the knack of folding it up properly.

In the case of Ashantee the umbrella has figured as a trophy, the great sunshade of King Coffee being all the British have to show for their waste of blood and treasure in equatorial Africa.

The material, hue and poise of an umbrella are so many criteria of respectability. A man may deceive with his hat often, with his gloves seldom, but with his umbrella never. It is an unerring test of character, a passport to gentility, and nobody is quicker to recognize the ring of the true metal in another or to detect the pretensions of the spurious ones than the true gentleman himself.—San Francisco Chronicle.

The Head Line Fiend.

American newspapers are too much for the average Englishman. The telegraphic headings especially confuse his dull perceptions. A Briton was lately complaining of the matter. "Why," said he, "it was two days before I knew that Mr. Beecher was dead, don't you know. I read 'On the Borderland,' 'In the Dark Valley,' etc., but didn't know it had any reference to the Brooklyn divine, and it was weeks before I knew that the Oregon was at the bottom of the ocean with a goodly mail for me. 'Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep,' 'Hungry Billows' and such like announcements appearing each day didn't convey any idea to me, you know, that the text told of a shipwreck."—Philadelphia Call.

Natives of New Guinea.

A bloodthirsty spirit has recently spread among a large portion of the natives of New Guinea, and numerous people have been killed. The reason for these murders is that many sacred houses have been built during the last few months, and the native custom requires that each of these should be consecrated with human blood.—Chicago News.

Near Amador, Cal., the Indians now buy coffins for their dead, instead of hanging the bodies on trees or throwing them into ditches. They refuse to use hearses, though.

An Old Time Hole Borer.

"I began drilling holes in the ground," said Mr. Delany, a driller of gas wells, in answer to an inquiring reporter, "in 1860, and have been at it ever since—that's twenty-seven years—except three years I was in the army. The drills then were lighter than we use now, and they have been greatly improved since, though there has been little improvement in tools in the last five years. We frequently struck gas in those days in good quantities, but we didn't want it then; we were boring for oil. It takes four men to operate a well, and the machinery is expensive. The men work day and night—two day and two night, changing at 12 o'clock at noon. One of the two men attends to the engine and boiler and dresses the tools, and the other attends to the well and the drill. The tools require constant sharpening. It is a mistake to suppose that any men can do this sort of work. Men of experience are required; common labor cannot do it. The largest oil well I ever bored, I believe, yielded 3,000 barrels every twenty-four hours. That was the property of the Forest Oil company, and was located in Warren county, Pa. I do not know what it yields now, probably very little. I had plenty of work during the oil excitement in Pennsylvania, and that was probably the wildest excitement ever seen, going far ahead of the gold excitement in California. We do not need to go near so deep to strike gas as to get oil. Every well in Indiana where gas has been struck stopped at a less depth than a thousand feet. It is largely a matter of guess work, or luck. We can tell nothing from the outside, because there are no surface indications."—Indianapolis Journal.

A Very Womanly Incident.

I saw a very womanly bit in a horse car one day not long ago. Two ladies, both well bred women of the world looking creatures, entered at the same time from opposite sides of the street. They sat down and paid their fares in the lofty way usual with women of their kind. Then one seemed to start, and her eyes fastened upon a big bunch of daisies the other had. Once or twice she turned away, but sentiment got the better of her, and she spoke out in the most childish way: "Oh, tell me, are the daisies out in the country?"

The other smiled coolly and said, "Oh, yes!"

Then the first woman turned away and her eyes filled brimming full. Then the tears ran over, and she had to wipe them away. By this time I was interested to see how it was coming out. No. 2 apparently did not see it, but looked out of the window and at the daisies with perfect unconcern. Then she signaled the conductor to stop the car. As she got up she quickly divided the bunch; laid them beside the other. "We both love them. Let us share them," she said, and got out of the car. Now, wasn't that pretty, and wasn't it rare? Indeed it was.—New York Graphic.

Marie Antoinette's Tandem in Buffalo.

A well known Buffalo man, living on the west side, has just returned home from a trip to Europe. Among other souvenirs he brought with him a diamond made for and worn by Marie Antoinette. The fillet is a plain band of Roman gold, inlaid with a mosaic of opals, turquoises, rubies and sapphires, depicting incidents in the lives of Helen and Dido. Above this rises a spray pattern of beaten gold exquisitely wrought, supporting a border of fleur de lis composed of rose diamonds and pearls. Three of the diamonds are from the famous Golconda mines. The monogram of the unhappy queen is engraved on the inside of the fillet. This somehow escaped the notice of the auctioneer, else it might have brought much more than was paid for it, 50,500 francs. The jewels alone are worth that. Such a souvenir would excite great interest if its possessor could be induced to place it on exhibition.—Buffalo Courier.

Roll Call at the Opera Comique.

There was a melancholy roll call of the company of the Opera Comique in the Theatre des Varietes. M. Carvalho and his son arrived, and the manager took his seat on the stage amid acclamations from the staff of the theatre and the people who were present. He was hardly able to speak, owing to emotion. When he said that he had come to call the roll, as was done by soldiers after a battle, there was a great deal of sobbing among the women, many of whom were in mourning. The chorus master called out the names, and the melancholy reply, "dead," was frequently heard amid the sounds of lamentation. The names of those whose bodies had been found were left out in the call. Ten were reported dead and eight injured. —London Standard.

Driving in New Mexico.

People in the east are sometimes astonished by the stories that are told of the long drives and rides that are taken in the west. A roadster in this region that is good for fifty miles a day is a rare animal. Col. J. W. Dwyer, of New Mexico, said the other day: We think nothing of driving sixty miles a day. I have driven a span of horses seventy-five miles in a single day without seeming to weary them. There is something about the air and atmospheric conditions that permits the lungs of the animals to work just right all the time. My ranch is thirty miles from Senator Dorsey's, and three hours is considered ample time to drive over there.—New York Tribune.

Earth and Atmosphere.

If it were possible to rise above the atmosphere which surrounds the earth, we should see nothing but an intense and shapely defined ball of fire, while everything else would be wrapped in total darkness. There could be no difference of light without an atmosphere or some similar medium for it to act upon; but if the air around us extended to a height of 700 miles, the rays of the sun could not penetrate it, and we should be left in darkness. At the depth of 700 feet in the ocean the light ceases altogether, one-half of the light being absorbed in passing through seven feet of the purest water.—Boston Budget.

A Bath Under Difficulties.

While about to take my bath in Olsu at the hotel, and when just touching the tips of my toes to the boiling hot water prepared for me, the whole family—father, mother and three daughters—came to wish me a pleasant bath. Before I thought I ducked under the water, but I stood till they left, although it did seem as though they would never cease bowing and paying compliments, all of which I returned, enveloped like some of the people in Fox's "Book of Martyrs," in a blinding steam. They did go at last, and I I jumped out as red as a lobster, and I feel red even now. —Japan Cor. Sacramento Record.

The Philadelphia North American says that after a goose has lived its natural life of fifty years, it then becomes a fashionable boarding house delicacy.

CROQUET AS A SCIENCE.

A GAME FOR EXPERTS AND NOT FOR CHILDREN AND PARSONS ONLY.

The Modern Croquet Ground Made of Dirt Rolled Hard and Level—Hits Hard to Make—Few Ladies Attempt Scientific Play.

Even as set up on ordinary lawns, with arches six inches wide, croquet is a game that requires an amount of headwork fully as great as is needed to play a good game of billiards. A man who is a very ordinary shot can win from one who hits with great accuracy if his headwork is decidedly superior. Of course, I am talking now about the four ball game; the game with one ball apiece is to the other what euchre is to whist.

If these things are true of the game as ordinarily laid out, they are multiplied in force many times when the ground is a perfectly level sanded dirt floor, when the arches are only one-fourth of an inch wider than the balls, and when both players are skillful enough to hit an exposed ball from end to end of the ground and to hide their adversary's ball behind a wicket with great accuracy.

The modern croquet ground is made of dirt rolled as hard as need be and made as level as a billiard table. It is surrounded by a slightly raised border, so that balls do not go out of bounds. To prevent rolling the surface is sanded slightly. The wickets are set firmly in a block of wood planted ten inches deep in the ground, and are of thick enough wire to resist a heavy blow. The balls are of hard rubber, 3 1-4 inches in diameter. The wickets are 3 1-2 inches inside measurement. The mallets may be of any pattern or size that suits the fancy of the player, but the most approved style is one with a head ten inches long, having hard rubber ends secured by a steel band, and with a handle about fourteen inches long and roughened so as to secure the grip. The best of them screw into the head and are perfectly round. The ground is laid out with two stakes of iron less than an inch in diameter, two wickets at each end and two on each side, in a line with the second arch from the stake and with a double middle wicket set crosswise. This middle wicket consists of two arches like the rest, joined over the top and about fifteen inches apart. The ball must be sent through both of these at a single shot. The only way to do this, with a fair prospect of success, is to take a roquet from a ball a short distance from the arch and get in the jaws of the first of the pair of wickets and at the next blow go through them both.

HARD TO ACCOMPLISH.

To get in position in any other way is next to impossible, because if the center of the ball is as much as a sixteenth of an inch to one side of a line drawn directly through the center of both wickets you cannot go through without a carrom, and carroms, in croquet, are mighty uncertain things for most people to try. Professor Charles Jacobus, of New Brunswick, can make the shot I have described at the center wicket, and he introduced it with great success in last year's national tournament at Norwich. It is now called after him—the Jacobus shot. A year or two before that, while he was living at Matawan, he introduced another carrom, which has since been called the "Matawan twist." His adversary's ball was in the "cage," as the double center wicket is called. His own was on the other side of the corner wicket, almost in the jaws of it, and directly wired from the ball in the cage and from the other balls. Mr. Jacobus struck the further wire of the corner wicket, carromed from it, going through the arch, and hit the ball resting with such apparent security in the cage. It is not often, however, that games are won by such sensational shots. It is steady, accurate play and good management that tell in the long run.

I had often wished for a standard of comparison between persons who play a good ordinary game like myself and the real experts. I made the comparison the other day, and it came out just as I expected. In nine out of ten games the man who is called a "splendid player" by his very ordinary competitors would make about two arches playing with Mr. Jacobus, or Dr. Reed, or Mr. Botsford, or any other of the "cracks," and the chances are that he would not get hold of the balls at all during the game. With a week's practice, and after becoming used to the ground and the narrow arches, he might do better, and bother the expert seriously, but he would not be likely to win a single game the first year.

OUGHT TO BE ABLE.

Furthermore, no man has any business to try to play on such a ground who cannot hit a ball almost infallibly at a dozen or fifteen feet, and who cannot, after getting a ball to play on, make the circuit of the arches on an ordinary ground once out of three or four times at least. He ought also to be able to make the different sorts of roquets—to send the driven ball a long distance while his own only moves a few feet, to send the two along together, and so send his own further than the driven ball. It is very handy, too, on occasion, to be able to make a "jump shot"—that is, to jump over a ball you are "dead" on and hit another one beyond and in line with it.

According to the rules in force in the National association, a ball is in play as soon as it is placed at the starting point ready for the first tap. It is usual among the experts not to attempt the first wicket on the first shot—the consequences of failure would be too serious—but to knock down to the far corner, where the following player is not likely to get hold of him. The next thing, of course, is to get hold of the balls, send your antagonist's next ball behind a wicket, and keep your own balls well together, making wickets when you can, and never allowing him to get a shot except from behind a wire.

When the game is played in this way, it may be finished in ten or fifteen minutes, but if the players get hold of the balls alternately, and make errors once in a while, as all merely human beings will, occasionally, the game may last for seven hours, as one of the games at the tournament did last August.

As yet but very few ladies attempt scientific croquet, but there is no reason why they should not. The short handled mallets necessitate rather ungraceful positions, but ladies need not use short handled mallets if they prefer grace to accuracy. But this kind of croquet is not an "exhibition" game, adapted to the display of graceful attitudes and pretty dresses, and meant only to bring people together in pleasant social relations. No one can play it who does not love the game for its own sake, and whose thoughts are not directed, for the time, wholly to the business in hand.—W. A. Platt in New York Mail and Express.

The warm bath in many cases of sleeplessness has been found a valuable measure.